
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD

STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	926 N Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Blagden Alley-Naylor Court Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	2F	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	May 31, 2012	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#12-160	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The owner, The United House of Prayer for All People, seeks continuing concept review for a new four-story, 12-unit residential building with ground floor commercial at 926 N Street NW in the Blagden Alley-Naylor Court and Shaw Historic Districts. The Board approved the massing and height of the concept in March. Plans were prepared by Suzane Reatig Architecture.

Property Description and Context

The existing lot is occupied by a warehouse/loading dock facility built in 1953. In the historic district application for Blagden Alley-Naylor Court, approved by the Board in 1990, it was listed as a non-contributing building. It will be demolished to accommodate the new construction.

The 900 block of N Street shows a variation of building styles, construction dates and building types. This is a common context in cases where development took place over a long period of time and by different builders constructing projects one or two at a time. No one style, builder, or type dominates. This block features flat-front brick rowhouses from the 1870s, four- and five-story apartment buildings like the 65-foot tall Henrietta from the early 20th century, and a formstone clad 1870s twin-tower Gothic Revival church. Heights, roof forms, gaps and setbacks are varied. Many residential buildings exhibit storefront alterations c. 1900 at their ground floors. The Board most recently examined this block in October 2011 when it approved the concept plan for a 40 foot tall rowhouse structure for 934 N Street on the vacant lot immediately adjacent to this site.

Proposal

The new building would consist of commercial space and apartment lobby on the ground floor and 14 residential units above, arranged in an H-shaped plan. The first and second floors will be standard height with the third floor extended with a mezzanine level so those residential units can have loft spaces.¹

The projections have been redesigned as two different but symmetrical arrangements. The east projection hosting the commercial use is a full height projection from grade with continuous glazing that wraps the corners. The west projection contains the entrance to the residential units which is sheltered under the overhang of the projection which starts at the second-story. Fenestration here does not wrap around to the narrow sides of the projection. The central bay has been simplified with a shorter canopy that no longer connects the two projections and replacement of the uppermost railing with an extended parapet.

The previous arrangement of three façade materials has been simplified to a two-part arrangement consisting of iron-spot glazed face brick and Rhinzink zinc metal panels.

¹ The plans use the convention of assigning "First Floor" to the first story above the ground floor.

Evaluation and Recommendation

The materials and construction details now shown on the front and alley façades establish an arrangement compatible with its historic context. The subtle differences in fenestration between the two projections successfully de-emphasize the width of the building.

The HPO recommends that the Board find the revised concept to be compatible with the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.

No part of this recommendation shall be construed as a recommendation for approval or disapproval for any necessary zoning relief or interpretation.